

the *Light-bringer*

# Lucifer<sup>®</sup>

*For seekers of Truth*

*Current topics viewed in the light of the Ancient Wisdom or Theo-sophia — the common source of all great world religions, philosophies and sciences*

**Christmas: the  
Initiation of the  
Mystic Birth**

**Can life be  
completed?**

**When is someone  
dead?**

**The other side of  
organ donation**

**Euthanasia**

**Questions about  
karma**



# Contents Lucifer — the Light-bringer

No. 4 | December 2018

**Editorial**  
*p. 98*

## Christmas: the Initiation of the Mystic Birth

*p. 99*

If we understand the true meaning of Christmas, it can be exceedingly inspirational.

Barend Voorham

## Can life be completed?

*p. 106*

For some people, old age does not offer them any perspective any more. For them, euthanasia seems to be a serious option. Which perspective offers the Theosophia? After all, what is consciousness and old age?

Barend Voorham

## When is someone dead?

*p. 110*

The exact moment of death is difficult to determine. Actually, you can ask yourself whether there is just *one moment* in which you die. It is perhaps better to speak of a process that lasts a while.

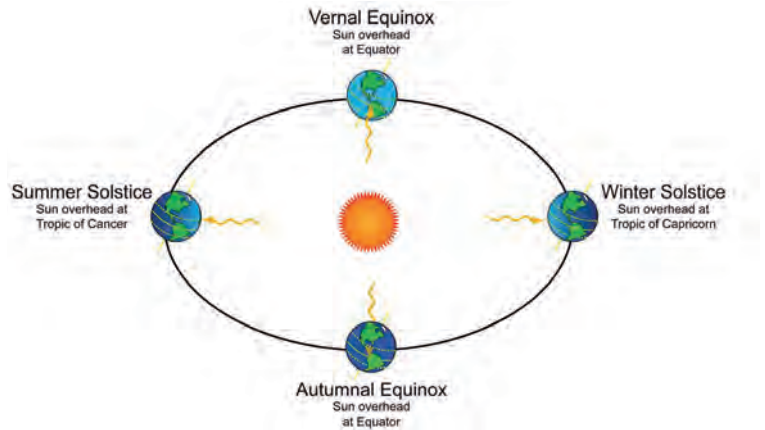
Barend Voorham

## The other side of organ donation

*p. 113*

Organ transplantation has almost become a common medical practice. Hardly any questions are being asked. Neither medical professionals, nor policymakers are raising questions about it. *Lucifer, the Light-bringer* does ask these questions and, moreover, tries to answer them.

Barend Voorham



## Euthanasia

*p. 119*

Is euthanasia really the “good death”? Does one actually see the consequences of this voluntary death?

Barend Voorham

## Observations

**123**

» Helpful or fearful in a crowd in danger?

## Questions & Answers

**124**

- » Questions about karma
- » Nature and natural laws
- » Consciousness, conscience and body
- » Belief and mediums
- » Chanting and disease
- » Ātman and Jivātman



# Editorial

December is for many people in the northern hemisphere a dark time. The sun comes up late and goes down early. Yet for many people this time is also the time of light, hope and cheerful spirituality. We celebrate the birth of light, the feast of the *Sol Invictus*, the Invincible Sun. Christmas is the festival of birth, hope and light.

Nevertheless, you will find in this issue of *Lucifer* some articles that have to do with dying and death. That may seem contradictory. We believe, however, that this is not the case. After all, you cannot die without being born and you cannot be born without dying. Dying and being born are the gates to another realm of consciousness. And it depends on your point of view, whether you call such passings birth or death. That is why we felt that we could publish an article about the Great Birth, the festival of Christmas, together with a number of articles that are related to dying.

In *Christmas, the Initiation of the Mystic Birth*, the esoteric background of this greatest festival of the Christian world is discussed. The winter solstice is a universal feast that was celebrated centuries before the birth of Christianity. In its esoteric sense it is still a very inspiring period. In this time of the year everyone, on his own level, can go through an initiation.

Unfamiliarity with death and the process of dying leads to a large number of issues in our secular world, which actually cannot be solved without the knowledge of Theosophia. In four articles we try to encourage the reader to further study on this subject.

First of all, we discuss *when* someone is dead. It seems strange, but actually we cannot determine it exactly. However, the answer to this question is important, especially in connection with organ donation and euthanasia. But it is also important for the questions around the so-called “completed life”. An increasing number of elderly people experience their lives as hopeless and consider euthanasia. If you would be better acquainted with the dying process and know that the withdrawal of consciousness – because that is dying – goes through a number of stages, you would probably be more careful with the request for euthanasia. This is clearly explained in the article “Euthanasia.”

Also with regard to the issue of organ donation, you come to very different conclusions if you are more familiar with the process of dying.

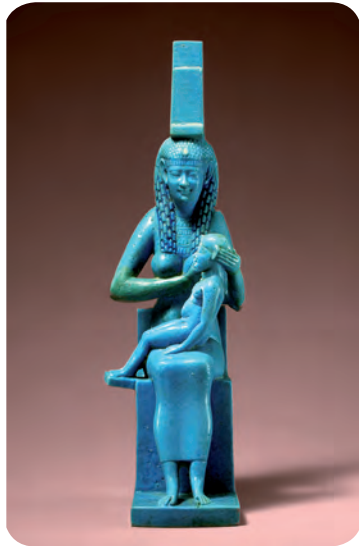
All articles are written by Barend Voorham, who made a special study of this theme.

In the section *Observations*, we discuss some interesting findings related to the behavior of large crowds of people at times of danger. Finally, we answer a few questions. This time they are about karma.

We have noticed that *Lucifer* is well read all over the world. That is inspiring, because it undoubtedly contributes to applying Theosophia, which is more necessary than ever in this dark world.

Your questions and comments are naturally very welcome.

**The editors**



This Egyptian statue shows Isis sitting on a throne, with Horus on her lap. These kind of statues were copied by the Christian churches, as Maria and her son Jesus.

# Christmas: the Initiation of the Mystic Birth

**For one a cozy get-together with the family; for another a ski holiday. Or we spray the smell of pine around an artificial Christmas tree, so that we have at least a taste of the atmosphere.**

**However, it can be different. Christmas can be exceedingly inspirational. It is the time of year in which great events take place. We should know more about those events. Then undoubtedly the celebration of Christmas will change.**

## Key thoughts

- » Christmas is much older than Christianity and was celebrated in antiquity by many peoples.
- » At the time of the winter solstice (December 21), the solar forces on earth are starting a new cycle and the impetus of nature is the greatest.
- » The Christmas story is a representation of initiation.
- » A Chrēstos (disciple) is tried and when he passes the tests, he becomes a Christos.
- » The “Christ child” lives within us. Christmas time is a very opportune moment to evoke that inner power within ourselves.

Christmas has something paradoxical. On the one hand, it is mainly a celebration of luxury. Exquisite meals, expensive gifts, beautiful clothes — these are the ingredients that seem to belong to the greatest party of the Christian world, together with the famous Christmas tree with its candles or its lights, which may or may not flash. But on the other hand, many also experience that this party is more than a civilized binge and more than the gifts we give each other.

Christmas is the party of peace. People who never go to church – or maybe they visit an old cathedral during their holidays as a tourist, armed with camera – go to church at Christmas. And the candlelight and the Christmas tree evoke even in non-believers something that looks like a religious experience.

I remember myself as a little boy, raised in a strongly atheistic family, that during Christmas I became

aware of something I could not possibly place. I could only describe it as a feeling of silence and peace. I did not relate it to the birth of Jesus at all. But I felt that there was something hidden behind Christmas, which really made it a sacred event.

Perhaps many still experience that vague feeling, that the commercial side of Christmas so often cruelly pushes to the background, or even wipes out completely. And for the lack of an adequate philosophy and because the dogmas of the Christian churches are unable to explain this feeling, that kitschy side of Christmas, with its absurdly expensive dinners and winter trips to both the ski resorts and sunny regions, increases constantly. Yet Christmas is still the party of peace and of the birth of the light. This inexplicable religious feeling arises not only because of the candlelight or the days off.

Christmas is definitely a special time.

This became very clear at the beginning of the First World War in 1914. In the no man's land between the trenches, British and German soldiers massively celebrated Christmas together. From Christmas Eve, unofficial armistice arose between German and British soldiers in some places, some of which even lasted until New Year's Day. For the soldiers who came to the front in 1915, the stories sounded like a myth and many refused to believe that such a fraternization had ever taken place.

## The origin of Christmas

Although the word "Christmas" is of Christian origin, the party celebrated at the end of December is undeniably older than Christianity. No one who seriously studies the facts can believe that Jesus was born in the night of the 24th on the 25th of December. After all, there are no historical documents of Jesus at all. Neither Jewish nor Roman writers and historians, who lived around and just after the year 0, tell us something about him. Philo Judaeus (20 BC-50 AC), a Jewish philosopher and historian does not mention him. The Roman-Jewish historian Josephus Flavius (37-101), who wrote a minutely historical book of the Jewish people, the twenty-one volume *Antiquities of the Jews*, does not speak either about a certain Joshua, as Jesus must have called. That is remarkable, since both are contemporaries – or at least alleged contemporaries – of Jesus. Also the so-called historical events mentioned in the New Testament, such as the dramatic events that allegedly accompanied the crucifixion – three hours of global darkness, an earthquake and the rending of the veil of the temple of Jerusalem – are not mentioned by them. This lack must have been noticed by later Christian writers, and they have therefore placed passages about Jesus in the work of Josephus Flavius, which are now regarded by most scientists as interpolations, so as forgeries, and are therefore not authentic.<sup>(1)</sup>

So we do not know anything about Jesus. We even do not know anything about his name. He is called Jesus of Nazareth, but should he not rather be called Nazirite, because he belonged to the religious group of the Nazirites or Nazarenes? Nazirite is derived from the Hebrew "nazir" that means "consecrated".

The Gospels, as recorded in the Bible, are certainly not historical records but mythical, symbolic representations of in particular initiation. We will come back to that later. It was not until about 330 that the Church of Rome decided that the birth day of Jesus would be celebrated on the 25th of December. That is about the same as when

we would now, in 2018, determine the date of birth of a figure from the 17th century, about whom there is no historical fact whatsoever. That December 25 is a randomly chosen day is evident from the fact that Eastern Churches, like the Coptic Church, recognize other dates as the birthday of Jesus.

The date December 25, however, is not really arbitrarily chosen. In ancient Rome, where the young Western Christian Church had its power base, the ancient mystery traditions were still popular among large groups of people. And since time immemorial, the party of the *Sol Invictus* – the invincible sun – was celebrated in Rome on December 21. Very old calendars already show that on that date that festival was celebrated.

The 21st of December is after all the longest night. The sun is furthest away from the countries north of the equator. It is about to come back again. The sun is born from the darkness of the night. The light comes back.

Undoubtedly, the introduction of Christmas – the commemoration of the alleged birth of the Christian Savior – was an attempt to eliminate pagan practices by incorporating them into their own system of dogmas. The actual date of Christmas should therefore not be December 25 but December 21-22, the day of the winter solstice. But due to a mistake of the Christian church, they chose for the 25th. This mistake has to do with the Mithras religion, in which the 21st of December is celebrated as the day that the deity Mithras is born.<sup>(2)</sup>

That Mithras religion existed before the time of Julius Caesar, who, as is known, revised the calendar. The origin of Christmas is thus largely based on the mystery religions which were in vogue in ancient Greece and Rome. But scholars also rightly argue that Germanic and Celtic traditions have influenced the Christmas holiday. In those traditions, too, the winter solstice of 21 December was celebrated.

The Christmas tree, the use of the holy mistletoe and spiced beer, which is still drunk around Christmas in some areas, have very old Germanic or Celtic origins. Thus the original inhabitants of Great Britain celebrated in the night of the 24th on the 25th of December a festival they called the "Modra Necht", or the Night of the Mothers.<sup>(2)</sup>

That Night of the Mothers naturally refers to a birth: the birth of the sun, but also to the birth of a "sun among the people", of a divine being.

The aforementioned, originally Persian savior Mithras, played an important role in the establishment of Christmas as well. 2000 years ago the Persian deity was worshipped

in all the countries around the Mediterranean and even in the north of Europe, for instance in Ireland. He is said to have been born on the night the sun was reborn. An interesting detail here is that Mithras was born in a stable.<sup>(3)</sup>

Evidently, long before our era in all parts of Asia and Europe, a celebration took place at the end of December that, in one way or another, was connected with “birth”. And although some scholars doubt what is exactly the origin of Christmas, it is definitely not of Christian origin. Some people do not like this idea. They believe that Christmas is deprived of its essence if you disconnect it from the birth of Jesus, of whom, by the way, we also believe that he was an excellent example for anyone who tries to mean something for his neighbors. But we think that if you try to find out the real meaning of Christmas, it gets a much deeper and more universal character. It will not be a commemoration of an alleged historical event, but an up-to-date, inspiring experience that can give a lot of support and strength in daily life.

### **The cosmic condition**

If we bring the facts above in relation to the cosmic condition that occurs around the 21st of December, then perhaps we can learn more about the origin and the meaning of Christmas, for it is not without significance that the sun “comes back” from his journey south on 21 December. We can see this in nature. Life has withdrawn from about the 21st of September. Many birds have left the northern regions. Flowers have died. The trees are in a slumber or sleep state. Their water flow functions no longer. They seem dead. But when the days start lengthening, life comes back again. The buds of the trees swell. The first mammals awaken from their hibernation; some give birth to their young. Snowdrops and crocus flowers crawl from the sometimes still frozen ground.

But there is more. Of course, the sun does not travel from the north to the south and then goes back again. It is the earth that revolves around the sun in about 365 days, with a certain tilt of the earth’s axis, which gives us the changing of the seasons. The earth has a close relationship with the sun. The solar energies reach the earth via the North Pole, flow through and around our planet and then leave it again via the South Pole. And those energies are not only the forces known in physics, but also of what we can call astral and even spiritual forces.

We are now discussing a subject with which we cannot deal extensively in this article. But in any case, we can

say that at the time of the winter solstice the solar forces on earth are starting a new cycle. From that time on, the impetus of nature is the greatest. We may perceive this in the surrounding nature. We also notice it by the fact that in this time of the year there is the tradition to make plans and to have good intentions to improve life. Although the meaning of this has been lost, this tradition can be explained by the fact that in this time our ideas and plans have “the wind behind them”. Just as it is better to solve a problem in the morning than in the evening when you are tired, you had better start carrying out your plans – and be careful: carrying out plans is not the same as having good intentions – when the year is still young.

### **The pagan origin**

Christmas has everything to do with the Mystery Religions of the countries around the Mediterranean. The problem that arises with these Mysteries is that they were completely secret. Only people who knocked correctly on the mystical door, were opened. And the teachings they received, were given only on condition that they would be strictly silent to the uninitiated.

Nevertheless, these Mysteries, in which the great ones of Antiquity, such as Plato, Pythagoras and many others were initiated, performed a constant influence on society. Not only because the initiates had the duty to apply the ethics that had been taught to them, but also because there were at regular intervals, what you may call, public dramatical representations, in which a corner of the mystery veil was lifted. In these representations, some of the old truths were taught to the general public by means of imagery. This should uphold the spiritual aspirations and lay a sufficiently solid foundation for an ethical life, which originates directly from those teachings.

For example, we know that the Eleusian Mysteries had a public ritual. At Agrae, near Athens, a kind of dramatic performance was held in the spring. They were known as the Lesser Mysteries.

All these rites were staged during the changing of the seasons. In that time the actual initiations of the Greater Mysteries took place as well. Although it was never communicated in public what took place during these ceremonies, it is not unlikely to assume that the people were sufficiently familiar with commemorating them on these dates. It must not be forgotten that the Mysteries were such respected institutions, which performed such self-evident authority, that their teachings, although unknown to the uninitiated, exercised a silent but natural influence. The

Roman feast of the Sol Invictus comes from the mystery teachings. But also allusions, myths, parables, were used to transfer ideas to the people, in order to inspire them, without risking the abuse of the teachings. The so-called birth story of Jesus, as described in the Gospels, is also such an allusion.

### **The Christmas story**

Perhaps one thinks that there is a contradiction in what we say. After all, first we state that Christmas is a pagan and not so much a Christian feast; however, we suggest that the birth story of Jesus has everything to do with Christmas.

And it really has! But actually, we should have written: *the birth of Christ*. The story of Jesus' birth must therefore not be regarded as a historical account, but as a representation of the initiation of the Mystical Birth, the initiation that takes place at the time of the winter solstice.

In the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, it is told that the Virgin Mary is conceived by the Holy Spirit. She and her husband Joseph go on a trip because of taxes. In Bethlehem, Mary gave birth in a stable because there was no room in an inn. There the baby is visited and honored by shepherds and later by three kings or Magi. Furthermore, we read in the Gospel of Matthew about king Herod who wants to kill the "king of the Jews", as the newly born savior of men is called. Joseph flees with Jesus to Egypt, while all newborns are killed.

More data than these cannot be retrieved from the Bible. And it would be a sad thing if this paltry plot were the only basis for the party of peace. Fortunately, there is a lot more. Because anyone who knows something about what initiation in the Mysteries really means, easily discovers a current truth behind this story.

### **The Initiation of the Mystic Birth**

It is impossible to write much about the essential background of initiation in a short article like this. For that you need insight in the composition of the human consciousness, and in the composition of our solar system. Those truly grand initiations in the Mysteries are not the performance of any ritual. That ritual is at best a symbolic representation of what actually happens when a neophyte is initiated.

Initiation means making a start. The neophyte makes a start with a new life. He is born again. And this is not only true in a figurative sense, it is also literally true.

What happens during initiation? Man's consciousness

retreats from the body, from this outer world, just as during the process of sleep or death. But whereas during sleep or death this withdrawal takes place unconsciously, during the process of initiation the initiate undergoes it consciously. The neophyte passes in full consciousness along the inner paths or channels of the solar system via various invisible spheres to the portals of the spiritual Sun. In every sphere he leaves behind the vestures belonging to that sphere. Only the pure, spiritual man can enter the regions of the spiritual-divine Sun. The neophyte then comes face to face with his own inner God, yes, during the higher initiations he even becomes for a short moment one with that divinity. Then he returns over the same inner magnetic pathways to the earthly sphere. At each sphere he takes up the habiliments he had dropped, exactly as in the birth process.

Finally, he finds his body on earth, which has been guarded by his Teachers. His consciousness descends again into that body, which awakens from its state of trance.

A Master of Life is then born. Someone rises from the dead as a twice-born, or, as it is called in Sanskrit, a *dwija*. He is surrounded by solar splendor. He is clothed with the sun.<sup>(4)</sup>

### **Evidence in the Bible**

You may think that nothing of this teaching can be found in the New Testament. But that's not true. The whole story of the crucifixion, from Jesus' entry into Jerusalem to the resurrection from the dead, is a symbolic representation of this initiation. Moreover, there are many allusions to initiation. How else could these words, attributed to Jesus, be explained?

Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God.<sup>(5)</sup>

This fragment continues with the doubt of one of Jesus' disciples who wonders how an old man can be born again. Should he then enter the mother's womb for the second time? Jesus answers:

Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.<sup>(6)</sup>

Initiation is dying. And you cannot die if you are not being born at the same time. You have to die as a child to be born as an adult. You have to die as a pupil to become a Master of Life. The old life dies. Life in the spirit is born. And you meet that “spirit” when you pass along the pathways of death to the heart of Father Sun and become one with the Self, the inner God, and then return to earth and are being born on earth for the second time in one life. In this way Buddha’s, or Christs are born. The beginning of these initiations is on the 21st of December: at the time of the winter solstice. And depending on the nature of the initiation, it takes three or fourteen days. That means that in the night of the 24th on the 25th of December the neophyte is born again. And in the case of very rare initiations of a high degree, the candidate is born again after two weeks, on January 4, the day on which the ancient Greeks celebrated Epiphany: the feast of the appearance of a god. The churches have tried to incorporate this feast by celebrating the advent of Three Kings or Wise Men, although they chose January 6 for that event. Probably the real meaning of this story had already been lost in those days, because these three “Sages” are symbols for three planets, which are during these initiations of high degree in syzygy, e.g. in a straight line. Orthodox churches celebrate Christmas on January 7. That is seventeen and not fourteen days after the winter solstice, but that probably has the inaccuracy of the old calendars as a cause.

### **The birth of the child**

The entire Christmas story is an allusion to initiation. First of all, there is the Virgin Mary. Of course, Jesus is not really born of a virgin. The fact that, according to the Gospel of Matthew, chapter 7, he had several brothers and sisters, is sufficient to understand that Mary cannot be virgin. Of all the great sages, Buddha, Krishna, Lao-tse, but also Plato and many others, is told that they are virgin born. All this is symbolism. These great “saviors of mankind” were born from their own virgin nature: their own divinity. It is our inner god who is spotlessly pure and therefore can be represented as a virgin. But there is more. This mother, or “Mater” or “Mary”, also symbolizes the material or receptive side of nature. That is why the virgin mother of Gautama the Buddha is called *Māyā*, which means illusion. Sometimes she is called *Māyādevī*, divine illusion. The Egyptian Isis, who gives birth to the son Horus, also symbolizes the material side of nature. By the way, the veneration of the Virgin Mary, as it takes place in both the Catholic and Orthodox

Church, is an outright copy of the worship of Isis, who was often depicted as a mother with her son Horus.

Divine energy operates in that material or vehicular fabric: pure inspiration. This is represented by a masculine force, a male god. In Egypt this was Osiris. And the father of the Buddha is called Śuddhodana, which means “pure water” or “pure stream”, in other words pure inspiration. At the start of each manifestation – the birth of the solar system or a planet – this pure stream of energy – the spirit side of life – penetrates in the vehicular or material side. At the initiation in the Mysteries this process repeats itself in miniature. From the Father – or the spirit – and the virgin Mother – or matter – the son is born. That son was also called the *Logos* or the *Word* in Greek. With this knowledge the first verses of the Gospel of John are also understandable.

Well, on a human scale, the spiritual man – the Son of Man – is born in the same way. From the virgin mother Mary – Isis or *Māyādevī* – the Christ, the Horus or the Buddha is born. An initiate, as we stated above, is a twice-born one. He is a child again. Initiates were therefore called children. This twice-born child is born in a stable or cave, as in the case of Mithras. Of the prophet of Islam, Mohammed, it is also said that the first verses of the Quran were revealed to him in a cave.

Do we have to take all of this literally? No, in the darkness of the physical existence or in the outer world – in the cave, in the stable – the child of divinity, who is within us, is born. It is born by initiation. The difference between initiation in the Mysteries and the cycle of dying and being born again lies in the fact that during initiation the body of the neophyte does not fall apart. Furthermore, the initiate does not lose his self-consciousness, so that he experiences where he is and what is happening. He can gain firsthand knowledge. At the birth of a child the spiritual aspects descend too. The child of the divinity is “wrapped in cloths,”<sup>(7)</sup> which means that it is enwrapped, encapsulated in a physical body. But in the common birth process the human being does not experience self-consciously what is happening. But that does not take away the fact that the Christ child lives within us. We can wake it up. We can let it be born within us.

There is, however, something in us that tries to prevent the child from being born. In other words: there is also a tyrant in our composite consciousness. The Bible calls this tyrant Herod.

Of course, the Herod in the Gospels fulfills an entirely different role than the literal interpretation would have us



to believe. It is true that there has been a historic Herod. There are even indications that this tyrant hunted on sages and initiates – on “children” – but all this has nothing to do with the Christmas story. The fact that in the Hindūstani epic, the Mahābhārata, an almost identical story about the birth of Krishna is told, should make us ponder about the meaning of this story. Krishna is also born when a cruel dictator, King Kansa, reigns. This tyrant learns that a child will be born, that will knock him off the throne. Just as Herod few centuries after him, Kansa decides to kill all children. But Krishna escapes, because he is placed in a wicker basket and set adrift in the river. He is found and raised by shepherds. Shepherds who were equally present at Christ’s birth.

Who is that Herod who wants to kill Christ? Who is that Kansa who wants to murder Krishna? It is a human aspect. Something in ourselves wants to destroy the inner Christ. It is the personality who, as a tyrant, wants to hold sway over us. That personality tends to selfishness, does not realize the ties that connect us to all the rest of life. It gives us the illusory impression that we are living in isolation, in separateness, as if our deeds did not influence others, and that we won’t harvest the results of our acts. The personality wants to kill the Christ child in us. The Christ within us does realize the essential unity of all that lives and is therefore by nature compassionate.

How can we let that Christ child live? How can we save him from the unscrupulous hands of Herod? By having him raised by shepherds. A shepherd is pre-eminently someone who works with nature. We must therefore work with nature. Then we will become that “child”.

Truly, I say to you, unless you turn [in your Self] and become like children, you will never enter the Kingdom of Heaven.<sup>(8)</sup>

And in the Gospel of Thomas it is written:

Among those born of women, from Adam until John the Baptist, there is no one so superior to John the Baptist that his eyes should not be lowered before him. Yet I have said, whichever one of you comes to be a child will be acquainted with the kingdom and will become superior to John.<sup>(9)</sup>

### From Chrēstos to Christos

Religious stories only have value for us if we are aware that they have everything to do with ourselves. The Christmas myth is *our* story, or rather, it should be our story. We

should know that within us the Christ lives and that we can awaken him. The initiate St. Paul wished his fellow believers to find Christ in their inner being.<sup>(10)</sup> Somewhere else, he speaks of certain difficulties that must be overcome “until Christ is formed in you”.<sup>(11)</sup>

If we decide to awaken that inner Christ – and the best time to take such a decision is at midwinter – then we are a disciple on the Path. In the East such a human is called a *chēla*, which means a pupil. They live to benefit mankind. They work hard to awaken their higher nature. In ancient Greek Mystery scriptures these disciples were referred to by the term Chrēstos. This term already appears in the fifth century BC.<sup>(12)</sup> It was used for a candidate on trial, a candidate for priesthood. If, after much suffering, he had passed many trials, he was anointed at a final ceremony, he became Christos, which literally means “anointed”. In fact, it is very presumptuous to call yourself a Christian. Have all Christians passed the severe trials? Are they anointed? It is out of pure ignorance that the followers of Jesus the Nazirite gave themselves the name Christians. If one takes the teachings and ethical lines of conduct of his Master seriously, as they are found, for example, in the *Sermon on the Mount*, he would at most be a *Chrēstos*. The earliest Christian author, Justin Martyr (100-165), calls, in his First Apology, his co-religionists Chrēstians — not Christians. And Lactantius (3rd century) says in *Divine Institutes*, (lib. IV, cap. vii) that it is due to ignorance that people call themselves Christians, instead of Chrēstians.<sup>(13) (14)</sup>

Everybody can be a Chrēstos. You need to develop an all-embracing love for all mankind. You are going to live to be a blessing for your neighbors. You are then a student-disciple.

In one of the Nag Hammadi scriptures, *the Apocryphon According to John*, you can find the following text:

And he anointed it with his goodness until it became perfect, not lacking in any goodness, because he had anointed it.<sup>(15)</sup>

When you read such a passage in the translation, you do not know that in fact the process from Chrēstos to Christos is described. “Chrēstos” as an adjective can also mean “good”. So, it is by goodness – by living the life of a Chrēstos in service to others – that you are anointed, that you become Christos.

From these few historical facts – and we could give many more – it appears that the original Christianity also as-

sumed that salvation can only be achieved through self-effort. We are not dependent on anyone. It is true that every Chrēstos needs a Teacher, but a Teacher can only give instructions. The student himself must walk the Path. And if he perseveres in the discipline required to reach the goal, he will eventually, by means of the initiation of the Mystic Birth, rise from the dead as a twice-born and be Master of Life.

## The meaning of Christmas

These initiations still take place. In this current winter solstice chelas, *chrēstoi*, may be initiated in the Mysteries of Death and Life on places that the profane eye cannot observe. They will have to endure the trials and then return to earth as a “savior of men.” If we keep them in mind during this Christmas time, it will give us a great inspiration. It gives us a sense of peace and bliss. The mystery of midwinter did not take place 2018 years ago. This year it can happen. It takes place in the heart of everyone who knocks in the right way on the mystical door. If we keep our thoughts with these great humans, these advanced brethren, the same mystery of Christmas occurs with us, albeit on a smaller scale, than with them. Christmas, the Mystic Birth, can only take place within man himself.

Look at the suffering in the world. See what people in their ignorance do to each other. How much suffering is there due to war, intolerance, incomprehension! How many people are not on the run for violence! But look also at our fellow human beings who roam, like blind men in large streets, in search of stability and certainty. People who suffer from unexplained depressions. People who ask in vain what the meaning is of this short life on this small planet.

Compare those thoughts with those of the chela, the disciple on the Path, who gives up everything for his fellow-men. He does not want personal happiness, he does not want a reward. He only wants to be a guide for those who do not yet know what he knows. He has mastered the words from *The Voice of the Silence*:

Can there be bliss when all that lives must suffer? Shalt thou be saved and hear the whole world cry.<sup>(16)</sup>

He has awakened the Christ child within himself. He has become compassion himself. The time-honored law of initiation is that you have to be what you want to become. You can only cognize something when you become it. If

you want to know the secrets of the inner god, then you must become the inner god.

In the *Gospel of Philip*, one of the mystical writings found in Nag Hammadi in Egypt, you can read:

You saw the spirit, you became spirit.

You saw Christ, you became Christ.

You saw father, you shall become father.<sup>(17)</sup>

In fact, the entire process of initiation is described in these three short sentences. Be what you want to become. Create an ideal. Imagine a Buddha, imagine a Christ, imagine the most noble human you can imagine. Nourish this image with your mind and slowly you will become it.

When we sincerely make a start, or a renewed start, at this time of the year, we will go through an initiation at our own level.

## References

---

1. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Josephus\\_on\\_Jesus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Josephus_on_Jesus).
2. G. de Purucker, *The Story of Jesus*, part 2, p. 10-11. See on website [blavatskyhouse.org](http://blavatskyhouse.org).
3. See ref. 2, p. 20.
4. See ref. 3, p. 24.
5. *The Gospel of John*, 3:3. (King James version, Oxford University Press).
6. *The Gospel of Matthew* 13:55.
7. *The Gospel of Luke* 2:7.
8. *The Gospel of Matthew* 18:3-4.
9. *The Gospel of Thomas*, verse 46. The Nag Hammadi Library in English. E.J. Brill, Leiden 1988, p. 131.
10. In the English translation\* 3:17 is written: *That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith*; Undoubtedly a poetically beautiful translation, but whether the meaning of the Greek original becomes clear, remains the question.
11. *The letter from Paul to the Galatians* 4:19.
12. H.P. Blavatsky, ‘The Esoteric Character of the Gospels’. *Collected Writings*, 15 Volumes, Vol VIII, The Theosophical Publishing House, Wheaton 1990, p. 184. See also:
13. H.P. Blavatsky, *Theosophical Glossary*, lemma Chrēstos. See also ‘The Esoteric Character of the Gospels’ ref. 13 p. 175 (footnote).
14. As often, H.P. Blavatsky was far ahead of her time when she made the distinction between Christians and Chrestians. More and more current scholars confirm her statements. See for example: Evidence of name change: “Chrestian” to “Christian”. <http://www.rationalskepticism.org/christianity/evidence-of-name-change-chrestian-to-christian-t44117.html>
15. *The Apocryphon of John*. The Nag Hammadi Library in English (see ref. 9), p. 101.
16. H.P. Blavatsky, *The Voice of the Silence*, fragment III.
17. *The Gospel of Philip*. The Nag Hammadi Library in English (see ref. 9), p. 147.

# Can life be completed?



## Key thoughts

- » Because consciousness is essentially boundless, it can always learn, grow and can never be “completed”.
- » Each phase of life is the result of earlier stages of life and has its own learning moments.
- » At death, consciousness can only withdraw when the life energy has been consumed.
- » For those who live spiritually, old age is the most blessed time of life.

**In many Western countries, where prosperity and luxury have increased considerably in recent decades, people are getting older. For many, that is a pleasing fact, because they do not want to die. The downside is that some elderly people do not want to go on living.**

**As one ages, the body no longer functions as well as it once did. Many elderly people therefore lose their independence. They no longer enjoy the things they do. And if their mental capacities also deteriorate, life no longer offers any perspective and they want to die. Some politicians want to facilitate this wish.**

Current Dutch legislation permits euthanasia in what is called unbearable suffering, provided that certain conditions are met. The patient himself must submit the request to a doctor, who must determine that there is hopeless and unbearable suffering and must consult at least one other, independent doctor.

However, some people are now considering the possibility of euthanasia for humans who do not have a deadly disease or hopeless suffering, but who feel that their life is complete. But can a life be complete?

## Materialistic starting point

If you approach this question from the materialistic point of view, you believe that when the body disintegrates, your life ends as well. So when you are old and worn out, you may see your life as hopeless, without any

perspective and complete. When you are no longer able to do the things you used to do before you were old, life loses its meaning. The things you cannot do anymore are mainly physical activities. After all, the body functions less well.

But not only the physical decline plays a role in this process. Your partner may be dead and gone. Your friends may already have died. Your children live far away and have little time to visit you. You are not interested in modern developments. Life seems complete.

Of course, we have to take these feelings of elderly people seriously. There is great suffering. However, we get the impression that this suffering is intensified because there is a lot of discussion about the issue of completed life and euthanasia. The sense of meaninglessness among many older

people and the fact that they do not have anything to live up to, is related to, or perhaps originates from, a certain “thought wave”, which, like other trends and modes, encourages people to take certain actions. It is known that when a famous person has committed suicide, it encourages others to do the same.

However, you could also approach the question of completed life – or alleged completed life – from a different perspective.

### **Spiritualistic starting point**

If you consider the spiritualistic point of view and ask yourself what a completed life is, you come to the conclusion that it cannot exist at all. The spiritualistic principle implies that consciousness or life is the basis of phenomena. So behind the body that grows old, there is consciousness that does not grow old. The body can come to its end, but the consciousness will live on.

Consciousness is essentially boundless: it has therefore always existed and will always exist. It cannot be destroyed or “completed”.

Every being – every consciousness – learns and grows constantly. It is constantly gaining new experiences and does not actually remain the same for a second. We always grow.

The evolution of consciousness means that its reach is always increasing. And because it is essentially boundless, the learning process can never cease to exist. There is therefore never a completed life.

So until the last second of his life, someone can learn, can gain new experiences. Moreover, after this life there is a next one.

### **Relative beginnings and ends**

Now there are relative beginnings and ends in life. Birth is a relative starting point and death is a relative endpoint. You can imagine that if you come close to that relative endpoint and you no longer see yourself as a human able to lead a meaningful life, you may choose to die, even if you know that life does not cease to exist.

We can say the following about this.

Each phase of life has its own learning moments. So manifested life can never be complete because you can still learn from it. Each phase of life is also the result of causes that were created in earlier phases of life — or earlier lives. There is law of cause and effect.

The harvest will have to take place anyhow. You cannot escape from your own past. You have chosen for the sit-

uation where you are in.

That means that every stage of life – no matter how painful it is – has its own learning moments.

### **A store of life energy**

According to Theosophia, every man and woman is born with a certain amount of life energy. In fact, you cannot die until that energy has been exhausted. In natural cases, human consciousness withdraws from this earthly sphere when it feels an attraction to spiritual worlds. The life energy, necessary for life on earth, is then used up. Sometimes people try to stretch their lives artificially, for example by placing someone on respiratory equipment. We are not in favor of that. Just like at the end of the day the energy runs out and you must sleep, so at the end of life there is the urge for the peace of death. Let nature take its course; that is best for everyone.

However, there are also cases of what you may call an unnatural death, such as traffic accidents, executions or suicide. In those cases, the body is eliminated or destroyed, so that it can no longer serve as a vehicle for the consciousness, but that consciousness has not withdrawn yet from the earthly sphere. It is left behind in a sort of intermediate area, which is called Kāma-Loka or the World of Desire. Every human being who dies moves through it. In cases of an accident or a deadly disease, man remains in an unconscious state in Kāma-Loka. You can compare it with a deep, dreamless sleep. It lasts until the life energy is used up. This period is exactly equal in length to what would have been the normal term of life of the living physical body, had the death from the accident not occurred. Also in cases of execution or suicide, man remains for this period in Kāma-Loka. There is, however, a big difference: man is now more or less self-conscious.

Although every case is different, the motive for committing suicide affects the situation in Kāma-Loka. If the motive is hatred and selfishness, you end up in a nightmarish condition, always repeating the last act of your life. But there are other cases. For example, if you commit suicide in a war situation, out of fear that you will be tortured and then betray your comrades, you end up in a different situation. There will, however, always be a certain amount of self-consciousness in Kāma-Loka, and this World of Desire that is polluted by all sorts of selfish earthly desires, is not a pleasant place to be, to use an understatement. Cases of euthanasia are actually also a form of suicide. The life energy is not yet exhausted, which means that you come to some form of self-consciousness in Kāma-Loka.

People request euthanasia because they suffer. And the suffering on earth can be great. But euthanasia does not solve the problem. For however great the suffering on earth may be, it is always less than in Kāma-Loka, which is an unknown world and where you have no means to actively respond. Moreover, there are no fellow human beings who can help or comfort you. You must passively suffer, until the life energy has run its course. Of course it will be used up sooner or later, because there is no such thing as eternal suffering.

Perhaps the saddest thing is that the suffering in Kāma-Loka does not solve anything, because the causes that led to the situation that you experienced as hopeless, and which lead to euthanasia, are still there. You will be confronted with them in a next life.

### **Old age: punishment or blessing?**

Ideas about completed life arise from a certain mentality. This mentality does not only appear when people are old, but arise and grow during their entire adult life. Man's thinking is generally focused on the physical side of things. One sees this material world as the only reality. Especially earthly things bring us pleasure or grief. Greed often plays the dominant role.

Already in high school, children are taught to focus on a career so that they can lead a luxurious life later on. Young adults want a nice house, a bigger car, to go on holiday twice a year. They want to be respected. When you are young, this endeavor is meant to establish your place in society. But these desires often do not languish when you grow old.

In natural situations, that striving for material prosperity stops when you reach middle age. Then you focus on more spiritual matters. Questions about the meaning of life play an ever greater role. The physical decline actually starts at the age of 21 and although you can slow down this process by physical exercise, as a sixty- or seventy-year-old lady or gentleman you are capable of far fewer physical things than a twenty-year-old boy or girl. Certain feelings, emotions and desires also lose their importance. And even though the short-term memory sometimes becomes less, spiritual "memories" become sharper. The more material-oriented issues lose their value. And that is a great blessing. Because those spiritual matters are much more important, much more sustainable.

If you grow old in this way, you remain useful to your fellow human beings. Because of the awareness that this old age entails, putting all things in a wider perspective,

you can be an inspiring example for young people. Fortunately, these "grandfathers" and "grandmothers" do exist and their grandchildren love to visit them.

However, when you remain focused on material things, grief arises. For example, someone who has played tennis all his life, will find out at some moment that he is no longer capable of playing. If he cannot substitute his beloved sport for a kind of "spiritual tennis", it will lead to a sense of futility.

Very often you see that the lower principles in our complex consciousness – which normally operate as a unit – start to separate from each other, making the lower part of man unstable. In previous phases of life the superpersonal aspects, such as the intellect, could control the personal qualities, but now these personal traits show up uncontrollably. And if you have cherished selfish desires during your life, these characteristics will not be so nice. Grandchildren do not like to visit these grandfathers and grandmothers. They whine and complain all the time and say that when they were young, everything was much better.

This instability can also lead to dementia. This occurs when the more intellectual and spiritual powers begin to withdraw, while the life energy is not yet used up and the body is still living.

### **Personal or super-personal**

If during your life, you have identified yourself more with the personal aspects of your consciousness than with the superpersonal aspects, then you are more likely to experience your life as completed when you are old. An example may perhaps illustrate that.

Take the case of someone who fully identified himself with his work. He was fully committed to his job. But then he retires. He feels useless. He was a "great man" at work. Younger colleagues came to ask him for advice. Now he feels like a garbage bag that has been put on the street. There is nobody who respects him, he thinks.

In fact he was not concerned with the usefulness of the work. He was concerned with himself. He wanted the respect of others. So when he has to quit his job, a sense of emptiness arises. Without his job his life appears to be meaningless.

Another man may have liked his job too. But he was more concerned with the result of the work and not with himself. He might have thought that the work he and his colleagues were doing, had a useful function in the society. He did not work for respect or just for his salary. His aim was to create something beautiful and useful.

When he retires and somebody else takes over his job, he does not feel sad. On the contrary, he feels satisfied because the work is continuing. He will undoubtedly find other tasks to fulfill.

### **Learn until you die**

If you learn from an early age to be idealistic in life, then you know that there is always work to be done, especially when you keep your ideal flexible and lively. There are always greater perspectives. If you become older, you will never take life as being completed.

Older people usually do not start thinking differently all of a sudden. So if you have been open minded all your life and eager to learn, you will never end up in an emotional and mental state where you no longer have anything to live for, even when your partner and friends are dead and the physical discomforts sometimes make life difficult.

The lesson for us all is that when we are young, we have to think carefully about the goals we set for ourselves. Are these goals aimed at the phenomenal world, or do we also have idealistic, spiritual goals that extend beyond this one short earthly life?

Discussions about completed life do not help to inspire elderly people to keep their head up and stay active in life. Constantly pushing the idea that euthanasia is possible and morally accepted, ultimately leads to a *thought epidemic* that will infect more and more elderly people — yes, even youngsters.

If you focus on the development of your inner character, you can always continue to contribute to mankind. Then you will learn until the last breath. Older people must realize that the last stage of life is the most important, and that you deprive yourself of the most valuable experiences, if you experience life as completed and request for euthanasia.

We know people who, on their deathbed, got insights into their own life and their relationship with others, which were extremely valuable. They will take these insights into the rest period that we call death. They will be woven into their consciousness and in their next life these insights will give their destiny a new direction.



# When is someone dead?

**The exact moment of death is difficult to determine. Actually, you can ask yourself whether there is just *one moment* in which you die. It is perhaps better to speak of a process that lasts a while.**

According to the current view, “death is the cessation of all biological functions that sustain a living organism”.<sup>(1)</sup> This definition is based on the body, the external vehicle, in which these biological processes take place.

Theosophy approaches this issue from the consciousness point of view. Then you must conclude that, for an ordinary human being, even if he is a physician, it is impossible to ascertain when the consciousness separates itself completely from the vehicle. You cannot even determine with certainty when the biological processes have fully ceased, not to mention the consciousness functioning behind the biological processes. In any case, the brain still functions after the last heartbeat. We cannot observe that, however, and we definitely do not encourage measuring it, because we are convinced that this hinders the process of dying.

Modern science has recently confirmed that there is still brain activity after the last heartbeat. Canadian ICU doctors appear to have ob-

served brain activity after a person was declared clinically dead. They confirmed their patient was dead by means of the standard observations, including the absence of a pulse and unreactive pupils. But tests showed that the patients’ brain kept working, showing the same kind of brain waves that are seen during deep sleep.<sup>(2)</sup> We must therefore be very careful to draw the diagnosis of so called brain death.

## **Withdrawal of life**

During the process of dying, life withdraws from the body. That is a complicated process. If a human – the consciousness – feels a strong attraction to other spheres, the life energy will slowly leave the body. In general, you can say that the life-activities, or the “life-juices” – the *pranas* – bind together to a cord – the so-called cord-filament – and leave the body, starting at the feet. But the process is more complicated. After the heart stops beating, a glowing spark of life remains present which is connected to the brain. Moreover,

## **Key thoughts**

- » There are no trustworthy signs of marking the moment of full death.
- » “Brain death” is not death.
- » We work with Nature when we allow dying people to die in peace.

certain *pranic* flows leave the body through different bodily holes.

All these processes can hardly be observed “from the outside”, or even at all. The people surrounding the body may believe that the person has died, while these physical-astral processes still continue. In any case, it is certain that after the last heartbeat that spot in the heart and the brain is still active and the dying person experiences his panoramic vision (further explanation, see page 116). Therefore, our advice is not to draw any premature conclusions regarding the determination of death. H.P. Blavatsky says that at least twelve hours have to elapse between the death of the person and the burning or the destruction by any other means of the corpse of the dead.<sup>(3)</sup>

This is completely in line with a statement by Master Kuthumi that it may seem that someone is dead while in reality he has not yet died.

No man dies insane or unconscious — as some physiologists assert. Even a madman, or one in a fit of delirium tremens will have his instant of perfect lucidity at the moment of death, though unable to say so to those present. The man may often appear dead. Yet from the last pulsation, from and between the last throbbing of his heart and the moment when the last spark of animal heat leaves the body — the brain thinks and the Ego lives over in those few brief seconds his whole life over again.<sup>(4)</sup>

H.P. Blavatsky states that in the case of sudden death the brain may even be dead but nevertheless affect the astral body, sometimes also called the astral Ego or *doppelgänger*. Or in her own words:

(...) in such rapid cases of dissolution, the body may be quite dead, and buried, and yet the brain — though its functions are stopped — may preserve a latent spark of will or desire, connected with some predominating feeling in life which will have the effect of throwing into objectivity, of thrusting, so to say, into a certain magnetic current of attraction the astral Ego, or *doppelgänger*, of the dead body.<sup>(5)</sup>

The astral Ego or *doppelgänger* is not the human ego; it therefore does not affect human self-consciousness. We only mention this to indicate how long the brain can exert *some* influence, which the living never can observe. It is almost impossible for ordinary people to follow the dying process.

We must therefore be extremely cautious about drawing conclusions.

### **Exact determination of death is impossible**

Gottfried de Purucker has written very clearly on this subject. We quote:

It may be asked as to the exact time of the snapping of the cord-filament: whether this takes place at the last breath or with the last heart-beat. The question is a pertinent and a proper one, and I will endeavor to answer it briefly as follows: it is not the last breath, nor again even the last beat of the heart, which marks the snapping of the vital cord, but both the last breath and the last heart-beat do mark the moment of apparent death, which is equivalent to saying the moment likewise of the vanishing of the larger part of the vital cord. Nevertheless as long as the panorama of the past life's experiences is passing through the brain, which occurs in all cases of death, there is still a slender strand of the filament visible to the Seer's eye, and the panorama itself becomes blank unconsciousness when this last feeble glowing strand in its turn vanishes; this is full and complete death of the body. What doctors call *rigor mortis*, or the stiffening of the body after death, begins instantly then, but becomes fully apparent only with the progressive loss of the heat of the body. The *rigor mortis* itself finally vanishes, leaving the body a cold and inert corpse.<sup>(6)</sup>

(...)

There are no perfectly defined and trustworthy signs which the body gives to the ordinary physician as marking the moment of complete of full death, otherwise of the snapping of the last strand of the cord of Life. The Seer knows, of course; but unfortunately, I know of no absolutely and infallible reliable sign which the ordinary medical practitioner could understand as showing him the exact instant when death is full and complete. It is known even to medical science that the mere cessation of the breath, and the stopping of the beating of the heart, are no conclusive signs of complete death, outside of other things; cases of resuscitation are on record which have occurred even when the heart has stopped beating and breathing has ceased. In consequence of this, it is not only wise but a following of the dictated of humanity always to avoid too precipitate or too hurried a disposal of the human body which is supposed to be “dead”. Perhaps the best signs of all that dissolution has really begun are the marks of decay which all physicians



recognize, such, for instance, as the flowing of matter from the nose, etc.<sup>(7)</sup>

## Keep perfect silence around the bed of the dying

For the sake of clarity: the dying process has not yet begun when a patient has been declared *brain dead*. Brain death is not death. It is a word that Harvard Medical School coined in 1969 to make organ donations possible. When a person is diagnosed as brain dead, the biological processes continue. The *pranas* do not yet leave the body. The patient is still alive. The removal of organs therefore takes place before a patient has died, and increased heartbeat and sweating as a reaction to the intervention show that bodily functions are still intact.<sup>(8)</sup>

Theosophy always advises to work with nature. We work with nature if we allow dying people to die in peace. Or in the words of the Master:

Speak in whispers, ye, who assist at a death-bed and find yourselves in the solemn presence of Death. Especially have you to keep quiet just after Death has laid her clammy hand upon the body. Speak in whispers, I say, lest you disturb the quiet ripple of thought, and hinder the busy work of the Past casting on its reflection upon the Veil of the Future.<sup>(9)</sup>

## References

---

1. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/>, lemma 'Death'.
2. <https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/human-brain-conscious-heart-stops-beating-death-neurology-research-a8232921.html>.
3. H.P. Blavatsky, 'The efficacy of funeral ceremonies'. Included in *H.P. Blavatsky Collected Writings*. 15 Volumes, The Theosophical Publishing House, Wheaton 1969, Volume IV, p. 508 fn.
4. *The Mahatma letters to A.P. Sinnett from the Mahatmas M. & K.H.*, transcribed and compiled by A Trevor Barker, Theosophical University Press, Pasadena California 1975, Letter 23b, p. 170.
5. See ref. 3, p. 505 fn.
6. G. de Purucker, *Esoteric Teachings*. 12 Volumes, I.S.I.S. Foundation, The Hague 2015, Volume XI, p. 23.
7. See ref. 6, p. 26.
8. E.J.O. Kompanje, "Geven en nemen", (Giving and taking) dissertation about organ transplantation, Rotterdam 1999.
9. See ref. 4, p. 171.



# The other side of organ donation

**Organ transplantation has almost become a common medical practice. Hardly any questions are being asked. Neither medical professionals, nor policymakers are raising questions about it.**

***Lucifer the Light-bringer* does ask these questions and, moreover, tries to answer them.**

Advertisement campaigns try to persuade people to fill out a codicil in which they give permission to donate organs. After you die your organs no longer have any use and ill people would benefit from them enormously, is the argument.

However, these campaigns do not result in enough organs for transplantation purposes. That is why a “no objection” system is implemented in countries like Belgium, Spain, Austria and France. After death, organs can be used for transplantation unless someone has declared explicitly that they object to that. Everyone is therefore automatically a potential donor. We disapprove of such laws, because they do not respect the physical integrity of a human being. The human body should be inviolable. And furthermore, we might ask ourselves whether people really benefit from donated organs.

## Quality of life

There are people who register as po-

tential donors out of love for their fellow human beings. We certainly do not criticize their attitude. Anyone who has witnessed the suffering of a kidney patient knows that his life is seriously limited by daily dialysis treatment. Or imagine the cardiac patient who will shortly die because of heart failure unless a donor heart is being transplanted. It is very understandable that these people long for an organ transplant! It may relieve their many physical discomforts. Maybe they will be able to work again. The “quality of life”, but also life expectancy, may increase. Whether this quality will indeed improve remains to be seen, as we shall attempt to demonstrate later.

## What is a body?

The key question each of us should ask ourselves before registering as an organ donor is: do I *have* a body, or *am* I a body? The prevailing view in our predominantly materialistic world is that we are a body and that

## Key thoughts

- » Organs are living beings.
- » Each body and each organ is unique.
- » Brain death is not death.
- » There are unknown but real consequences for both the donor and the recipient of organs.

an organ is nothing more than a part of it. And that body is a coincidental, orderly set of atoms and molecules that has become animated in one way or another.

Theosophy, on the other hand, states that each body flows forth from a centre of life or consciousness, which is essentially boundless. Based on this assumption the body flows forth from the divine core, that every human being in their deepest essence is. One might argue that neither idea can be proven and that it therefore depends on which position you choose. But one could try to discover which “belief” – we prefer to say: which starting point – provides the best explanations for a number of phenomena.

It will come as no surprise when we say that we believe that the idea that we *have* a body is much more logical, explains more facts and contributes to our learning to see the meaning of life. What is very important, especially in the case of organ donation, is that every human being is unique.

## Unique

Human beings have a boundlessness behind them. They have manifested themselves many times already. In those countless lives they have made themselves what they are right now.

But boundlessness is more than that. Boundlessness applies to everything; otherwise it would not be boundless. It therefore also means that a human being has boundless possibilities for development. And during those many lives it has drawn upon those inherent, essentially boundless forces. Some have been activated while others remain dormant.

Each being is different, because each has developed itself in the boundlessness to what it is at this moment. Boundlessness implies that there are boundless possibilities, so each being emphasizes certain aspects, has its own development, follows its own path, in short; each being creates its own unique self, its own unique character. Therefore, no two beings are the same.

The specific, unique level of development of any being expresses itself in an equally unique vehicle. Each being becomes what it is at its core. It takes on exactly that form and capacities that fit its character, what it has made of itself in the boundless history that lies behind it. That is why a human consciousness always manifests itself in a human vehicle. That is why the consciousness of a rose, a tiger or a hummingbird manifests itself in respectively the vehicle of a rose, a tiger or a hummingbird.

But apart from this main characteristic, every being has

its own specific qualities. The further developed a being is, the more individualized it is, the more it distinguishes itself from others. Consequently, humans, who have a specific character, differ much more between themselves than, for example, the individuals of a particular species of mammals do. And these again differ more as individuals than the individuals of a particular species of reptiles do. The unique human character constitutes from itself that unique body, which is composed of cells, of organs, which in their turn are unique as well. They exactly fit the human who uses it to manifest himself, simply because they bear his essential characteristic, his signature.

## The body is composed of living beings

The human body is an aggregate of countless less developed beings. Beings that in themselves are just as boundless as the human being is but have activated that inherent boundlessness to a much lesser degree. They do not possess self-consciousness as humans do. What are these beings? There are many and in many gradations. There are, for instance, the beings we can observe through a microscope, such as cells.

Cells differ strongly from each other, by the way. A brain cell is entirely different from a heart cell or a stomach cell. Cells are constituted by molecules, which in their turn consist of atoms. Those molecules and atoms are living beings as well. Or, put differently: behind these physical particles there is a life centre, which is called a life atom in Theosophy. They constitute the cells, and form the organs of the body, which are living entities as well.

These physical particles are the *vehicles* of unselfconscious entities. And these entities behind the physical organisms react slavishly to the “laws of nature”. Their “laws of nature” are produced by the human consciousness, of which they are the physical side. Just like a teacher or parent imprints its characteristic on a receptive pupil or child, the human consciousness imprints its characteristic on these beings. In the latter case the imprint is much stronger though, because the free will of these unselfconscious beings is less.

In this way the life atoms, that are the basis of all beings that compose the body, receive impulses from the human — the thinker, who we can call the coordinating centre. In a sense they will copy those impulses on their plane. Something like this happens already in even more self-conscious entities. A dog for instance reacts to its boss. On its own level it more or less imitates that character. If its boss is aggressive, the dog is raised in an aggressive way.

This happens even more automatically in the lesser developed entities in the human vehicles. Slavishly they follow the “orders” of their boss. In other words; because they have only a minimal portion of free will, they are almost completely formed and modeled by the expressions of consciousness – the thinking mind – of the human being. In this way, a close cooperation exists between the human consciousness and the body.

## Facts

Is this theosophical doctrine in accordance with the facts? Does the body with its parts really belong to us, to what we are as unique entities?

Certainly. All parts of the body are unique. Our fingerprints are unique. Our DNA is unique. The blood is unique. Organs are unique as well. They all belong to only one human being. This is clear from the fact that another body rejects an organ.

According to the materialistic point of view, an organ is a vital part of the mechanism “body”, from which our consciousness springs. Basically, this means that organs are parts, just like a machine has parts. But the parts of a car, for example, are interchangeable. It has never occurred that a battery that was put in from another car was rejected! The facts support the theosophical hypothesis. Organs are unique. That is because they are composed of life atoms, which are formed by the unique consciousness of a being, which has a boundlessness behind it.

## Every organ has its own consciousness

Every organ is the vehicle of a certain aspect of the human consciousness and therefore it has a specific function in the body. The heart for instance is the hierarch in the physical human being, because it is the main expression of the aspect of spiritual consciousness. The intellectual aspect uses the brain as a vehicle, while the liver and spleen represent the lower aspects.

That is why consciousness affects the body and the organs, as we all know. Someone living in a situation of continuous stress can develop a peptic ulcer or have a heart attack.

Every organ has its own instinctive nature. Following H.P. Blavatsky we could state that every organ has its own memory. Or even:

The brain, or thinking machinery, is not only in the head and skull, but, as every physiologist who is not quite a materialist, will tell you, every organ in man, heart, liver, lungs, etc., down to every nerve and muscle, has, so to

speak, its own distinct brain, or thinking apparatus. As our brain has naught to do in the guidance of the collective and individual work of every organ in us, what is that which guides each so unerringly in its incessant functions, that makes these struggles and that too with disease, throw it off and act, each of them even to the smallest not in a clock-work manner, as alleged by some materialists (for, at the slightest disturbance or breakage the clock stops), but as an entity endowed with instinct? <sup>(1)</sup>

It is clear what H.P. Blavatsky addresses here. Every organ has in itself an instinctive consciousness, because of which it can operate independently in cooperation with other organs and without interference of the human brain. If you isolate an organ from its natural environment it can live on, for a short while at least. That is because there is a leading consciousness behind the organ – its own “thinking apparatus” Blavatsky calls it – that has its own memory, or its own specific, yes unique experience from which it can draw.

That experience is gained together with the hierarch of the totality to which the body belongs: the Human. The human consciousness provides the field in which the body with its many living entities is able to live and gain experience. In other words, there is a close collaboration, a true symbiosis, between the human and the instinctive consciousness of the different organs.

## Brain death

Let us now turn to the practical consequences for the organ donor.

In our materialistic world people are not likely to feel that donating organs after their death will lead to consequences. But that is exactly the case.

The first consequence concerns the removal of the organs. For this happens when the human has not yet – or has not entirely – deceased.

In fact, the moment of death is not easy to determine. We tend to assume that someone has died when the body is no longer functioning. But even about the moment of cessation of physical activity uncertainty reigns. It has been established that there is brain activity after the heart has stopped beating.

The word “brain death” has been invented for the purpose of organ donation. A Harvard University committee used the term for the first time. It was invented especially to enable organ transplants. Of course, you cannot take organs out of dying – that is to say, still living – people.

However, when people are brain dead, it *seems* as if they are dead. But are they?

The concept is that you can speak of brain death when the different functions of the brain and their interconnection have been definitively lost. The brain is therefore no longer functioning. But is the brain dead in such a situation, or is it just defective? That question has never been answered satisfactorily.

In any case, the body of someone who is on artificial respiration is still functioning. There is a case of a pregnant woman who was declared brain dead; she fully carried out the pregnancy and gave caesarean birth to the child. Can we seriously claim that a child can grow in the body of a deceased mother?

Medics claim that brain death is an irreversible process. That may be true in most cases, but not all. In Denmark in 2012 a young 19-year-old woman fell into a deep coma after an accident. She was declared brain dead. A doctor asked the parents' permission to remove the organs. But what happened? When they disconnected her from the respiratory ventilation machine the young woman didn't die: 24 hours later she woke up. Since that moment a year has passed, and she is now able to walk, talk and she even took up horse-riding again. She does have problems with her short-term memory; problems however which may not have occurred if the doctors would have treated her longer. This case stirred up quite a commotion in Denmark. Many who had registered as organ donors withdrew their permission.

Because the state of brain death has become more widely known to the general public, people understand that the organs are removed from a living body that sometimes reacts so fiercely to stimuli that it has to be tied down. Questions have rightly been asked as to whether the removal of organs from these so-called deaths should not be accompanied by terrible pain. Can doctors guarantee that this is not the case?

### **The process of dying**

According to Theosophy, dying is a gradual process. Dying is the withdrawal of consciousness. This does not happen in one go. In cases of natural death, consciousness slowly withdraws from the body. The dying person loses interest in the daily routine. In fact, he is at the same time engaged in a birth process in another area.

But also people who die abruptly, for instance in a traffic accident or other accident – and they supply most organs – do not die in a short moment. Here as well, the

consciousness slowly withdraws from the body, even if it has been terribly mutilated in the accident. Something very important happens in this process. The dying person – unjustly called “dead” already in medical terms – sees his own life passing by as if in a vision. This process is called the panoramic vision in Theosophy. Everything in the past life, down to the smallest details, is viewed in a very bright light. The causes of inexplicable events during life are being perceived. One sees how one thought and action gave rise to another. And most importantly, the dying person understands the thorough justice of all this. In fact, the perceiving human consciousness – the consciousness of the personal human – is raised to the level of what in Theosophy is called the reincarnating ego. This reincarnating ego, the true human, is much more universal than the personal human, who is in fact the mask of the true human. That is why the human being experiences the vision as if he looks at the past life of another human being and is able to evaluate the life that just ended objectively and sincerely.

The duration and intensity of this panoramic vision strongly depend on the individual character. In general, one can say that the more spiritual someone lived, the shorter and intenser the vision is. But everyone experiences this retrospection.

It goes without saying that this vision is extremely important. It enables the human being to draw conclusions, learn his lessons, the value of which cannot be underestimated in respect with lives to come.

The vision usually still takes place once the heart has stopped beating. “He has passed” those around him say, and they let their emotions run free. But even though this dying process is irreversible, the dying human himself oversees his life in a very clear consciousness. That is why the theosophical advice is to be quiet in the room of the deceased, also after death has taken place.

There is probably no crueller disturbance of this peace and quiet than when doctors start to incise the body.

### **Donor and receiver engage in a relationship**

The second effect for organ donors is that they connect themselves with the organ receiver. For this organ has its own unique history as we stated before, its own “memory” and is infused with the life of the human being whose body it helped compose.

Well, such an organ is implanted in another body. To begin with, that part of the body cannot start its dissolution, which disturbs the natural dying process. As a result of

this, the dying human, who usually still possesses a certain amount of vital energy because he died “before his time”, can reach a certain level of consciousness on the plane in which he finds himself. This plane is rather coarse and teems with gross emanations from the earth.

Man is more than just a body. Therefore, dying is more than just casting aside the physical body. The more coarse elements of consciousness, like passions and desires, have to be cast off by the consciousness centre as well. This process takes place relatively quickly when the body decomposes, so the consciousness will not experience any obstructive attraction from it. If a part of the body is not dissolved, the further processes of dying may be delayed. The dying person can be attracted to the person who has received his organ.

Furthermore, in a subsequent life, the donor will regain control of his body. The life atoms that composed his previous body will be drawn psycho-magnetically to the human being this time as well.

The same applies to the living beings of the organ that was transplanted after his death. However, this organ has also experienced the influences of the consciousness of the receiver. It was forced to cooperate with it. In this way the ignorant donor has, through no fault of his own, created a connection with the temporary “owner” of his organ, that was being kept alive in the body of someone else thanks to all kinds of artificial interventions.

It is unknown what further complications may arise from this. But for us it is clear as day that all this really goes against nature. We cannot endure working against nature without punishment. At some point nature will react and the disturbed equilibrium will be restored.

The fact that a person is a donor for altruistic reasons cannot render inoperative the workings of an impartial nature. A young child who puts its hand on the stove gets burned. Ignorance about organs and transplantation does not eliminate the laws of nature.

### **The receiver**

The general idea among the population is that a person with a diseased organ is healthy again after a successful transplant. The illness has gone. But anyone who knows a person who has received a donor organ knows that this is often incorrect. After the transplantation the patient remains ill. This is because complications often occur, such as rejection symptoms, increased susceptibility to infections, and an increased risk of tumors. The patient needs to take heavy medication that in turn results in side

effects. Probably also because of this, psychical problems occur as well, like an inclination to suicide and personality changes in severe cases.

What is the cause of these problems?

It is ascertained that the receiving body always rejects the new organ. The body never accepts the new organ. That is logical if you realize that each human being, each body and therefore each organ is *unique*, as we described above. That is the background of the symptoms of rejection that accompany every transplantation. The body experiences the new organ as alien and hostile, and its immune system automatically reacts. Incidentally, the immune system of the organ itself is activated against the foreign body in which it is placed.

The physical consequences for the receiver are severe and they are suppressed as much as possible with strong medication. So, the patient is certainly not cured.

It is usually ignored that there are consequences on the consciousness level as well. Yet there are many receivers of organs who have gone through personality changes. Cases have been described of a man who felt more feminine, of people who experienced paranoia. People wonder whether they are still themselves. Many physicians deny these psychological problems or ascribe them to the power of suggestion that is associated with the serious surgery the patient has undergone.

The transplanted organ belonged to someone else’s body and bears their character. The consciousness of the deceased is still located on this material plane, even though his body has died. Especially if he has died recently and abruptly – like in a car accident – he will remain in what we may call the earthly atmosphere. Unselfconsciously he will exercise a certain influence on that part of the body – the organ – that is kept alive artificially and in another body. This influence is particularly strong in the case of essential organs. That is why it is established that especially receivers of heart and lungs showed certain characteristics of the donor.

### **Death and life**

Issues such as organ transplants arise because materialism dominates society to such an extent that people rarely wonder whether this vision of life is correct. Is life nothing but breathing matter? Is disease a mistake of nature? Is the human body nothing but an ingenious machine, in which the parts can be changed like tires?

Society fixates on physical life so strongly, that it would do anything to prolong it. It is not only the sick who are

asking doctors for healing, for organs, for major operations. Society as a whole seems to experience it as a defeat if someone dies untimely as a result of illness.

In matters of life and death only man himself can decide. He should be able to freely question about life, about disease, about death, without being forced or manipulated. Although many governments are guided by liberal principles, this individual freedom is actually violated by them because they are indiscriminately advocating the donation of organs.

For the avoidance of misunderstanding, we do not claim that anyone should not be allowed to register as a donor. Neither would we want to deprive a patient of the choice for a new organ. We only argue for honest and complete information.

We must think about death, about disease, about life, even when we are young and not sick. Then we can make conscious choices.

## Reference

---

1. H.P. Blavatsky, 'Esoteric Instructions', *Collected Writings*, 15 volumes, The Theosophical Publishing House, Wheaton, 1980, Vol. 12, p. 624.



### Key thoughts

- » Everyone has a certain store of vitality. As soon as that supply of life energy is exhausted, one dies.
- » If you die by accident before that certain amount of energy has been consumed, you will remain in Kāma-Loka unconsciously till that energy is used up.
- » When you die voluntarily, you will have a certain degree of self-awareness in Kāma-Loka.
- » In a next life you will have to face the same causes which led to the situation in which you chose for euthanasia.
- » Suffering cannot be the decisive argument for euthanasia.
- » Life is boundless and can never be completed.
- » Every life phase has its learning moments, even when one is demented.

# Euthanasia

## Is euthanasia really the “good death”? Does one actually see the consequences of this voluntary death?

Due to the increased hygiene and medical developments, people – at least in the richer countries – are living longer. That is not always a blessing. In the prosperous countries they even speak of an elderly *problem*. With the passing of years the body becomes old and worn out and often the mental capacities become limited as well. Dementia is already considered to be one of the most common diseases in some countries. Elderly men and women themselves feel the inconveniences and speak of a *completed life*. They do not feel like going on living.

A large number of patients suffer a lot of pain from one of those aching diseases, such as cancer. If the doctor says that you cannot be cured, and you fear a long, terrible stay in hospital and a painful death, euthanasia seems to be a godsend.

### Euthanasia and legislation

Euthanasia is the practice of intentionally ending a life to relieve pain and suffering. There should, of course, be a request from a patient who suffers so much, that he wants to

die. But anyhow, you intervene in the process of dying, for if you had not given the patient a deadly pill or an injection, he would have lived longer. Although euthanasia is forbidden in many countries, in recent years the legislation on euthanasia has been liberalized in many others. In countries such as the Netherlands, Belgium, Columbia, India and in some American states it is legal, although certain conditions must be met. In an increasing number of countries, however, where euthanasia is forbidden, the authorities often turn a blind eye. The standards are changing. Euthanasia is becoming more and more accepted.

Now you may wonder whether it is better for the patient if he dies prematurely. After all, nobody wants to suffer. And if you know you have to die soon, and the remaining days of your life you must spend in pain, then you may consider your quality of life so worthless, that you would rather die. After all, the patient would have died anyways, albeit a few days or weeks later.

Literally, euthanasia means “good



death". Is a quick and painless death not better than a slow and painful one?

The answer to this question depends on the vision you have on life.

### **Store of vitality**

As is apparent from this issue of *Lucifer, the Light-bringer*, the process of dying consists of a few phases. However, it can only begin when the attraction to the more inner spheres is greater than the attraction to the outer spheres: life on planet earth.

Now every human being has an attraction to this earthly atmosphere. Otherwise he would not be born here. Everyone also has a certain amount of life energy or vitality. That life energy, as it were, is the fuel on which the body and the entire lower nature runs.

As soon as that supply of life energy is exhausted, one dies. Then the attraction to the inner worlds is too strong. That is a natural process.

However, if the body is destroyed before the store of vitality is consumed, human consciousness remains for some time in the astral sphere. It stays in that part of the astral sphere that we call Kāma-Loka. We are talking, for example, of people who have died as a result of a traffic accident or a fall from a roof etc. Someone who committed suicide belongs to this category too, although he experiences something very different in that intermediate sphere, which is Kāma-Loka, than the one who dies in a car accident.

All these men and women who die in an accident, before their life energy was consumed, remain the time they would have lived on earth, if they had not had that misfortune, in Kāma-Loka, but they remain unconscious. Their state of mind is like a dreamless sleep. However, people who have self-consciously ended their lives, unlike, for example, people who have died in traffic, come to a certain degree of self-awareness in Kāma-Loka.

### **A certain degree of self-awareness in Kāma-Loka**

As noted elsewhere in this *Lucifer, the Light-Bringer*, the condition after death, also for those who chose for euthanasia, depends on a large number of factors, such as the motive with which one chose for euthanasia, the character one has developed, the amount and nature of the desires one has cherished, and the last thoughts before one dies. So, there are no standard answers to what the person who dies by euthanasia experiences. In general, however, we can say that such a deceased person will come to a

greater degree of self-awareness in Kāma-Loka than the average person.

Now Kāma-Loka is not a pleasant place to stay. Anyone who knows the nature of the human desires can imagine that an atmosphere that is completely permeated by these often selfish human desires is not a beautiful place to live in. Happily enough, the majority of humans pass through this sphere unconsciously or semi-consciously. After all, it is a temporary state of consciousness for the dying man, because he is on his way to the spiritual state of consciousness of Devachan, if, at least, he has any spiritual aspirations to work out.

However, the one who has self-consciously chosen for death comes to a certain degree of self-awareness in Kāma-Loka. He thinks again and again the last thoughts before his death, as in a self-repeating dream from which he cannot escape.

Of course, the suffering on earth may be great. One does not decide lightly for euthanasia. But no matter how great the suffering in a body on earth is, it is never as painful as in Kāma-Loka. On earth you have free will and you are able to control and direct your thoughts, no matter how difficult it may be. In Kāma-Loka you have no means to act. You constantly undergo the thoughts and desires that you have thought just before you died. You have to endure them passively, until the life energy has been used up.

### **Postponement is no cancellation**

Perhaps the saddest of euthanasia is that it actually solves nothing. Due to your own thinking and acting you have come into a situation that seemed hopeless to you. But the situation in itself is not without perspective, you interpret it as such.

Accepting karma, the law of cause and effect, surely helps a lot to be in peace with yourself, no matter how awful the situation may be. Karma never fails. The situation in which you find yourself, and which is so painful for you, is a consequence of your thinking and acting in the past. If you flee from it, by willingly opting for death, you do not solve the problem. In other words, the causes that led to the situation in which you are considering euthanasia still exist if you voluntarily choose dying.

You cannot prevent the sun from rising. Tomorrow always comes! The mental state in which you experienced life as hopeless will reappear in a next life, because the source of it is still in your character. It is a part of you. It will only disappear when you allow it to run its course.

Of course, we do not trivialize in any way the pain that

people feel. We all must do our utmost to ease it. And fortunately, the medical world has a lot of resources to relieve pain. But according to us, pain can never be the reason for someone to be euthanized. Allowing suffering to be the decisive argument for euthanasia, is going down a slippery slope. Because it is impossible to measure pain. There is no scale for pain. It is already extremely difficult to assess physical pain, let alone sadness of soul. Can mental or psychological pain also be a motive for euthanasia? Who determines the nature of suffering? When is the suffering so great that euthanasia is justified? These questions cannot be answered. That is why you see that in countries where euthanasia is legal, as in the Netherlands, the boundary keeps moving. Even people who do not have a deadly disease but suffer terribly because life does not make sense to them, demand the right to euthanasia.

### **Can life be completed?**

There are people who request for euthanasia because they think their life is completed. They think that they have lived their life. There is nothing left to live for. They think that everyone has the right to decide their own life. They speak of self-determination: that you should have the freedom to die whenever you want. Euthanasia, so they say, is a human right.

But can life be completed? If you assume boundlessness, which is the first basic proposition of Theosophia, life can of course never be completed, because that would mean an end to it, and it is boundless. However, there are relative starting and ending points. Being born is a relative starting point, dying is a relative end point. Could it be so, that if that relative endpoint approaches, you can consider that specific life as being completed?

Well, every life phase not only has its own learning moments, it is also the result of causes created in earlier life stages, or in previous lives. So, in one way or another, its harvest will have to take place.

That means that every stage in life – even if it is a very unhappy one – has its own moments of learning. Actually, you have chosen for those moments, yes, you have craved for them, otherwise, you would never have come into that situation.

We see very often in the process of aging that the lower principles in our constitution – normally operating as a unit – begin to detach from one another, which makes the lower part of man unstable. The body becomes weaker when you get older. In fact, the decaying process of the

body begins just after your 21st year. When you are over 60 or 70, there are a lot of things you cannot do anymore, which you could do when you were 20 or 30. Certain feelings, emotions, desires also lose their importance. The short-term memory often works less.

But on the other hand, it is true that the focus may shift to more spiritual matters. Therefore, the more materialistic-oriented issues lose their value. And that is a big blessing, because those spiritual matters are much more important, they belong to a spiritual side, the lasting part of our consciousness. It's much sadder when attention is focused on the material. Attachment to these external things leads to grief.

Now people who are no longer capable of the physical activities they used to do, sometimes find their lives worthless. But when they focus on spirituality, they have a life to live.

It is extremely important to learn to view life in a broader perspective. That leads to wisdom. If the elderly is capable of doing that, they can teach youngsters an important lesson, just by being there. And their life is not at all complete.

### **Dementia**

The issue of euthanasia becomes even more complicated when you apply it to elderly people with dementia. They are hardly aware of what they are.

Sometimes, however, someone has communicated in a statement before he became demented that he wants to be euthanized if he will ever become demented. However, this is a very precarious situation, because how can you know in advance that life is not worth living? How many teenagers want to become a pop star or a sports hero? When they are adults and they are not a pop star nor a sports hero, is their life worthless? How do you know when you are not demented, that you want to die if you are demented?

Dementia can have several causes, but there is always a certain disharmony. There is always an imbalance. The higher aspects have already been retracted, so have actually already died. So in a certain way, it is a normal process. However, we don't need to become demented. If you keep your interest in life, if you live a harmonious and spiritual life, then you won't become demented, at least the chance of becoming demented is much smaller. Of course we do not judge anyone who is demented. You never know exactly what the cause is. That cause can come from past lives. What do demented elderly people learn, you may wonder.

What do we know what they learn? We often believe that they are suffering. But are they suffering? Do we see the real human being? Or has the real human already left, and do we see just the physical remnant?

In the light of Theosophia, you may be sure of one thing. Whether demented or not, everybody will have their panoramic vision. So demented elderly will see the causes, which have resulted in dementia. They may draw their spiritual conclusions.

Euthanasia for demented elderly people is certainly not wise. In fact it is a crime, because the human being is incapable of deciding. Moreover, the causes that led to dementia have not been eliminated and will have to be resolved in a next life.

### Free will

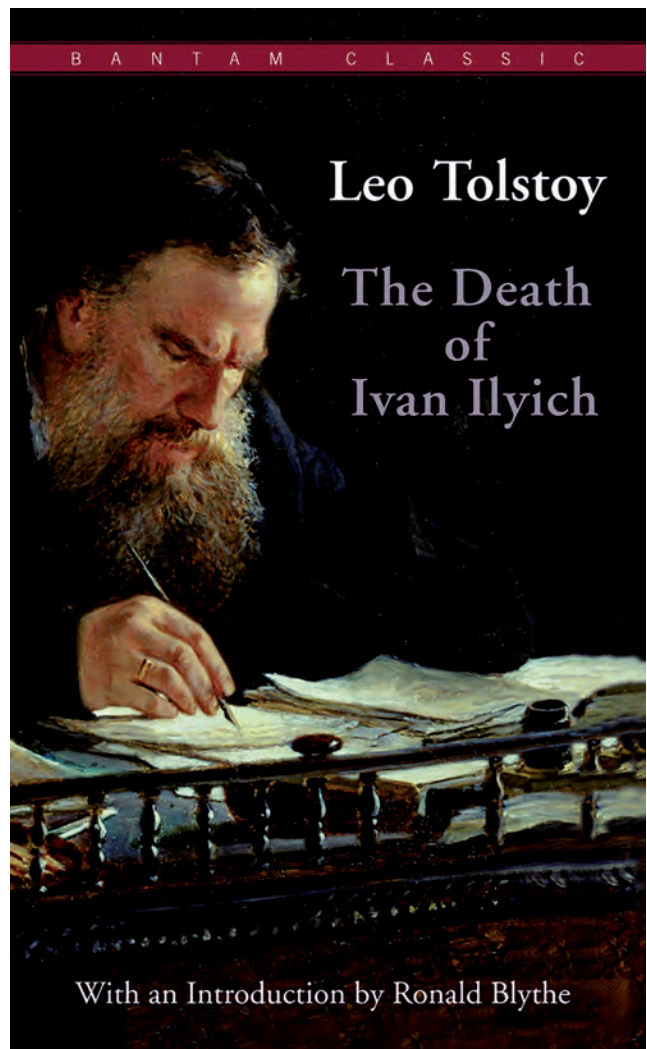
Without any doubt, we fully recognize the free will of every human being and of course everyone must be able to make his own choices in life. However, you should ask yourself whether men and women have sufficient knowledge to make a choice about living or dying. What does one know about the processes of death? What do people know about the panoramic vision and the post-death conditions? If the idea of reincarnation was more familiar, there would surely be less need for euthanasia. Then we would know that suffering has a cause, and that this cause has to be resolved. We cannot run from it. But we would also know that you can solve every problem. We would see perspective in every situation. Moreover, we would know that death is only a temporary farewell, that love is much stronger than death, and that we will always meet our loved ones again: yes: in the core of our heart, we are always together, because we are all one.

Therefore: death is a relative end. And old age is the preparatory phase for that relative end. See old age especially as the harvest time of life, the autumn of life. If you have lived spiritually, have been living in compassion, then old age is the most auspicious, the most blessed and spiritual time. Death then comes like the evening dusk, very gradually, very calm and peaceful, very blissful. The journey that the consciousness will make to spiritual spheres, is a wonderful adventure.

Have you cherished your selfish and gross desires, perhaps even trampled over others, then old age is not that nice, because then remorse, attachment to outer life, fear of death, will spoil the last days of life. But even then, you can learn something.

There is a wonderful short story of Leo Tolstoy: *The Death*

*of Ivan Ilyich.* Ivan was a man of the world. He lived for his pleasures. But suddenly he became ill. Probably he had cancer, but that disease was not known in the 19th century. He visited doctors. He suffered terribly. The people around him knew he would die. But nobody said anything. They hoped he would die soon. His colleagues were already thinking about how to take over his job in the office. Only a small young boy was true and compassionate and tried everything to alleviate Ivan's pain. And then suddenly, Ivan sees himself through the eyes of others. He realizes that he lived for himself alone. And at the same time a great sense of love towards his fellow human beings arises. And he does not feel any pain. He is not afraid of death. *In the place of death, there was light.* Imagine that euthanasia would have been committed on Ivan. Then he was robbed of this amazing, spiritual experience, which would give his next life a completely new direction.



# Observations

## Helpful or fearful in a crowd in danger?

Two researchers from the Radboud University in Nijmegen, Netherlands, Bertruke Wein and Rob Willems, have studied the behavior of large crowds at times of danger. They use their knowledge in training courses for security of large events. They also advise organizations to make the locations of large events as safely as possible. Here are some of their interesting findings.

People act in a different way during a natural disaster than during an emergency situation caused by humans. The degree of uncertainty determines the way in which people react to panic. We can predict to some extent how a forest fire or a hurricane develops. “If you feel that you can do something, you are less likely to panic,” says Willems. In an emergency situation caused by humans, for example a terrorist attack, the situation is different. “Then you have to deal with unpredictable behavior. A human being is not only an acting but also a thinking being. (...) That uncertainty gives extra stress.” Because the situation is difficult to assess, the risk of panic increases. (...)

When a crisis situation occurs, the media soon talk about panic. In reality, however, Wein and Willems see little real panic: “The idea is that a crowd often panics. This may be the case at the start, when there is real fear of death or a great danger, and there are hardly any opportunities to escape. But after that, people start helping each other fairly quickly.”

Research shows that media hype influences our perception: the anxiety is aroused, and we estimate risks higher. “That’s why it’s so great to see that people (...) keep going to massive events”, Wein and Willems say.<sup>(1)</sup>

### **Are we swayed by fear or do we remain morally in control of ourselves?**

We humans communicate with each other on several levels: not only on a physical level by means of material signals and speech, but also on an idealistic-spiritual, intellectual and psychological level. Especially our psychological nature can easily run wild if we let it resonate with a panic wave. By doing so, we contribute to the speedy spread of fear

and panic from person to person — something we can *prevent* by keeping our psychological nature under the guidance of those aspects of our thinking that are able to look objectively and to ascertain what is best for everyone in a situation.

Our inner being can do that. It is the essential core of every human being. It is the source of all our selfless and wise actions. As long as we live from that inner core or being, feelings of fear or aggression cannot control us, cannot dominate us.

### **Everyone is co-responsible**

It all matters a lot. It is well known that frightened people often try to flee from a locality via the route they took when they entered. Those who stay calm know that everyone has to follow the signs to the emergency exit.

Here, security guards can play a major role, but they are not the only ones. In fact, everyone can play a powerful role by doing what is necessary for the whole group. Other people will see how calm and clear we are. They will follow our instructions and become calmer themselves.

From a theosophical point of view, it is no coincidence that we find ourselves in such a critical situation. Through certain actions in our past we are directly involved in the things that occur to *all* the people around us. If in such a situation we only seek our own safety, we produce a karmic debt towards our fellow human beings. And we will have to compensate for this debt in the future.

So, the challenge we face is to assist our fellow human beings and do everything in our power to do so. In this way, we strongly contribute to ensure that the sensible solutions will tip the scales in the whole group.

Fortunately, many people are responding to the call of their conscience, as the researchers wrote: panic is often temporary. Subsequently, more and more people are starting to help others.

### **It’s a matter of attitude 24/7**

Assisting a crowd of people will be easier and more natural

if we already have that attitude day in and day out, 24/7. If in all situations of daily life we try to live from our selfless, “clearly observing” core — because that works just as positively in small incidents as in large events. We give an appealing example of such a theosophical attitude in practice. William Quan Judge writes (omitting personal names):

Great excitement last night. It was the regular night of the ... T. S. and ... was to speak. We got there at 8.15, and the hall was full. He began, and had just been fifteen minutes, when it was discovered that the building was on fire. We stopped and let 1,000 people in the various halls get out, then quietly went and none were hurt, only two, ... and ..., getting a few quarts of water from a burst hose.

It was a queer exit, for we went downstairs beside the elevator, and glass, bricks and water were falling down the light well, while the fire on the top stories of it roared and made a fine light, and streams of fire ran down the oily elevator pipes on the other side; and firemen pulled up hose neck or nothing as we got away. It was ...’s own meeting, and it ended in fire! <sup>(2)</sup>

## References

---

1. Kennis van nu [Knowledge of today; ed.], website: <https://www.dekennisvanu.nl/site/special/Paniek-in-de-menigte/116#/Article/Paniek-in-de-menigte-voer-voor-deskundigen/9462>.
  2. W.Q. Judge, *Letters that helped me*, letter 22. Online available: [https://theosophytrust.mobi/Online\\_Books/Letters\\_V1.2.pdf](https://theosophytrust.mobi/Online_Books/Letters_V1.2.pdf).
- 

# Questions & Answers

## Questions about karma

Why does reaping the good karma from your previous acts often seem to take longer than reaping the bad?

### Answer

There are three kinds of karma.

- 1) Karma (causes) that in the past was caused by actions and thoughts and that will manifest itself in this life.
- 2) Karma (causes) caused by actions and thoughts in this life, that only manifest in the future.
- 3) Karma (thoughts and actions) that we sow now and that will only manifest in future consequences.

So there is still a lot of karma that is waiting in the warehouse of our consciousness, so to speak, until the time is ripe.

When is that time ripe? If the condi-

tions are such that the karmic seed can germinate. If we sprinkle seed on the land in the summer, we cannot expect it to germinate in the winter. This is also the case with karmic seed. Sometimes a certain karmic cause – or a series of causes – is so strong that other karma has to wait a while. When that karmic source has dried up, life can suddenly take a huge turn, both for good and for bad. There are many examples of this. Politicians or artists who are very successful and then suddenly “fate turns against them”. The opposite is also possible. However, fate does not turn against them, one karmic cause has been processed and another can now manifest.

Moreover, as has been said, the circumstances must be right for the elaboration of certain karmic causes. To give an example: suppose a young person thinks certain thoughts and does certain actions, which have everything to do with his youth and his peers. Then

you cannot expect him, as an older person, to experience what he has created karmically with those peers. Only in the next life can he, again as a young person, bring in the harvest. And this regardless of whether he experiences the harvest as good or bad.

Good and bad are concepts that the thinking man attributes to consequences. Nothing is good or bad *per se*. Thus a difficult youth, or a financially precarious situation, may be experienced as bad, but it can give rise to a spiritual life. The opposite is also possible, of course.

In other words: it is man who interprets the circumstances and calls them good or bad. If he is aware of the lawfulness of karma, he will always be satisfied, because he knows that he caused those circumstances himself.

### Question

Everything that happens, does it have to happen?

## Answer

Certainly. But that is not doom. It happens because there is a cause. And once the cause is there – the action is done, or the thought is thought – nobody can revoke it. Then there must be an effect.

## Question

According to the law of karma, is there some way of softening the effect possible?

## Answer

If you mean by “softening” that the cause will not work out completely, then the answer is “no”. Mitigation comes when you realize that karma is pure justice. You never get more on your plate than you can handle, because it was always you who sowed the causes — of course together with others. You will always have to experience what you have done to others. With that you restore the balance. That way you will grow in consciousness. That is why karma is your best friend.

Suppose that no appropriate consequences would come to your actions. Then we could be strengthened in selfishness and materialism. Now we occasionally get a “corrective tap” on our fingers. We give ourselves that tap. Because it is not karma that punishes or rewards, we do it ourselves.

## Question

Is there “happiness” or “bad luck” in life or in a competition?

## Answer

No. We often do not know the causes of circumstances or incidents in life and therefore call it “happiness” or “bad luck”. But there are underlying causes that can ultimately always be led back to ourselves. Moreover, what we call “happiness” can be unfavorable for our spiritual development in the long

term, while what we call “bad luck” can ultimately be very beneficial.

## Question

According to the teachings of karma we are born to where we are attracted. Likeness attracts likeness. So how can you explain the following?

Someone is born to a very poor family. The parents are illiterate farmers. They have a lot of children, as many as twelve. One of these children becomes president of the country.

## Answer

This is like the case of Napoleon, who was born in a very simple environment in Corsica but became Emperor of France at a relatively young age and at the time was the most powerful man in Europe.

Such cases occur, and they are easy to explain with the doctrine of karma.

First of all, we have to say that a person has many kinds of attractions. There is a physical attraction, an emotional attraction, an intellectual attraction. But people can also be attracted to each other by ideals. People have a composite consciousness, and every aspect of that consciousness creates its own causes and harvests its own consequences.

The question, however, is: what is the most dominant aspect of our consciousness? What drives us the most?

For example, if the intellect is the dominant aspect in our consciousness, and if we have made all kinds of intense contacts with other intellectuals in the previous life, then this will be the driving force that attracts us to be born somewhere. Maybe there is also a less strong artistic attraction, but that is overruled by the intellect.

Now suppose that someone has a very strong attraction to lead and especially with respect to a certain group of people. Suppose then that he has few spiritual

ideals and from the state of death, he wants to exercise power again as soon as possible. The power in him can be so great, that he can be born in any family that belongs to that people, so that he can quickly exercise his power-loving influence on that group of people again. In fact, it doesn't matter in which family and in which circumstances he is born, because, as his character becomes more pronounced in the course of his youth, he is automatically “driven” to the position that happens to him by virtue of his previous incarnation. Thus Napoleon could climb from corporal to emperor and in the case, you call it, become president even though he was born into a simple family.

## Question

A baby is abandoned by the mother. Why does the baby have to undergo this?

## Answer

The word “have to” suggests that somewhere there is a power – a god or something like that – that has a plan with that baby. That is not the case. This too is karma.

Now it's very difficult, if not impossible for those of us who can't look into past lives, to see what exactly the reasons were as to why someone is abandoned as a baby. But let's say this about it.

There is no such thing as purely individual karma. Why not? Because we are all connected and what one does has an impact on the other. We constantly influence each other. We create causes together. We think thoughts that others pick up. In short, there is no situation in the world that is not created by a collective.

Therefore, it is not only the individual karma of a human being that leads him to begin this life as a foundling. Of course the mother – and the father! – have to do with it. But also perhaps the

family of the mother, or the denomination to which she belongs. The general mentality with regard to unmarried mothers may have to do with it. The huge gap between rich and poor can be a cause. In short, there is a huge range of causes that have led to this situation. It is therefore the responsibility of all of us!

Of course, the orphan himself has a special relationship to this fact, but what it is, can only be determined with certainty by someone who can look into the previous life of that person. Therefore, modesty suits us.

One thing we can say with certainty: in essence, karma is compassionate. Even, yes, the most difficult situations teach us the most. For many reasons we end up where we are. We can learn our lesson from that.

### Question

Can karma also be committed (caused) while asleep?

### Answer

In a cycle, periods of activity are alternated with periods of rest. For us humans these rest periods are sleep and death. As long as we are not able to act there independently and based on our free will and make choices in those states of sleep or death, we cannot consciously create karma. In sleep and after death, we *undergo* the consequences of causes that we have created in the waking state.

### Question

How could one's karma be caused in the higher spheres (outside the earth) and what is then one's state of development?

### Answer

Beings that have learned to live in other areas of existence will act in those

worlds, just like we do here, and thus make karma. Just like beings that are lower on the hierarchical ladder act, and thus cause karma. They will reap their consequences in the area or sphere in which they acted, just as we humans do in this material sphere, and on planet earth, must reap our karmic harvest. By acting, and thereby harvesting consequences, one grows. Wherever that happens and whatever creature it may be, consciousness will eventually expand.

### Question

How about the karma of celestial bodies (stars, planets, solar systems) and of animals and plants?

### Answer

For us this is hard to grasp but based on the logic and the law of analogies we can state that also suns and planets act. We can observe something of that, although we always interpret it with our human consciousness. In any case, we see that stars move, that they can rotate around each other. We see the interaction between, for example, our sun and the planets. All this takes place in much larger time spans than we are used to living in, so that we can hardly understand anything about it. Nevertheless, we can *assume* that this must also lead to growth in this cosmic being.

Animals and plants also act. They interact with other animals or plants, and with man and the sun, which causes growth in plants. However, compared to humans there is this difference, that the beings of the lower realms of nature do not have the same degree of free will as we humans have. Moral responsibility can therefore not be blamed on animals and plants.

Yet these beings also grow in their consciousness. As a being is less developed, it will increasingly follow the path of

least resistance and thus, instinctively, learn its life lessons, so that it can ever more express itself within the vegetable or animal consciousness. After all, even in the lower realms of nature beings act, thereby creating karma, and harvesting consequences. Thus they learn their lessons.

## Nature and natural laws

If one has no influence on laws of nature, how can one change animals and plants by cross breeding them?

### Answer

Natural laws are habitual patterns of cosmic beings. Although they seem eternal to us, they will nevertheless change over time, because these cosmic beings also live and thus grow in consciousness.

Our habitual patterns are the laws for those beings that are less advanced than us, such as animals and plants. Our habitual patterns influence those beings. Animals and plants contain many more properties and characteristics than they have developed so far. All we do when we cross breed animals or plants is activate some of those sleeping properties so that they can manifest themselves. We do not make these properties. We create, as it were, a favorable environment, so that animal or vegetable consciousness can bring out those latent properties from the inside out.

### Question

Can one get energy by praying or meditating on the laws of nature (sun, moon, fire, air)?

### Answer

As said: laws of nature are cosmic

habits. We live in the cosmos, are a part of it and undergo what happens in it, whether we want to or not, we are therefore always under its influence. The only question is: how do we position ourselves? That is a matter of our own free will; of our own choice. An example: when you get up at sunrise in the morning, you have the thrust of nature behind you. You will then be much more able to do certain things, make plans, be creative. You can also stay in your bed in the morning. Then you miss the stimulus of the growing solar power.

Well, can prayer and meditation open us to the cosmic powers? It is only what you understand by praying and meditating. Some people understand prayer as speaking to a god outside of them who asks them to satisfy a desire. That will certainly not give you energy. But if you meditate, for example, so that you are better able to fulfill your duty towards your fellow man, then you can get energy from it. As with everything else, the motive is also decisive here.

### Question

If animals are not allowed to be eaten, why do they exist?

### Answer

Animals are just like people, on a pilgrimage. The meaning of their lives is growth, evolution. They do that at their animal level, we at our human level. They are in essence absolutely equal to us, just as a child in primary school is equal to a child in secondary school. Moreover, there is a close relationship between the realm of man and animals. All the realms of nature fulfill a function in the whole. We cannot survive without each other. The planetary life is composed of ten classes or kingdoms, all of which live with thanks to each other. If you took out one kingdom,

you would deprive the other planetary kingdoms of the possibility of life.

The beings that are further developed fulfill a life-giving power in relation to the less developed beings. They are like energies on which the lower beings live. Those lower beings serve as vehicles for those higher beings. They are an instrument that is needed, so that those further developed consciousnesses can gain experiences.

Everything works together. We cannot live without each other.

By the way, Theosophy never gives commandments. So we don't say that you shouldn't eat animals. Out of respect for all life, however, the conclusion is obvious, that we do not want to hinder our younger brothers in their evolutionary journey which is what we do when we kill them for our food.

### Question

Why is lower nature important to humans?

### Answer

This lower nature serves us as a vehicle without which we could not gain experience in this outer world and therefore could not grow.

## Consciousness, conscience and body

Does every human being have a conscience?

### Answer

Undoubtedly. Our Conscience is the stock of spiritual and ethical experiences from past lives and this life. Everyone has these experiences, although one has more than the other.

Having a conscience does not mean that you always listen to it. You can go against your conscience. And if you do that very often, at some point you will no longer hear the voice of your conscience. This is always temporary, because you can never eliminate the experiences you have gained.

### Question

Does the subtle body (soekcham saria) go to the Kāma-Loka?

### Answer

We speak of the *Linga-śarīra*, the model body or astral body. I assume that this is the same as the subtle body.

Now, once death has taken place, consciousness has detached itself from this material realm and the body is decomposing, then the *Linga-śarīra* is also rapidly dissolving. After all, it is nothing more than a vehicle, a body, although it is something more ethereal than our physical body, but it has no sustainability whatsoever.

The desires, feelings and personal thoughts of man come to some form of self-consciousness in the so-called coveted world or Kāma-Loka, but the real person – the spiritual aspirations and ideals – also survive this temporary phase and flourish in the spiritual world which is called Devachan.

## Belief and mediums

To what extent should people believe in mediums?

### Answer

Believing is not the word we want to use in relation to mediums. Mediums exist. According to the Theosophy, they are people with a sensitivity to all



kinds of astral influences, like the astral remains of people who are dissolving in Kâma-Loka, or other astral entities. The interpretations of their impressions from the astral, however, are not ours. First of all, mediums are not self-conscious or active in the astral light. They *undergo* impressions and lack the knowledge to interpret them correctly. To make a comparison: each person sees lights in the night sky, which we call stars. But can we explain these lights correctly? Do we know that the suns are many light years away? Or do we think that they are fireflies, or the eyes of angels, or maybe even cosmic candles? We do not deny the existence of mediums, although there are undoubtedly also fakes. Their statements are, however, often incorrect. In any case, they certainly have no contact with the deceased, because the real Human being rests in an atmosphere far beyond the reach of even the most sensitive medium.

## Chanting and disease

The chanting (rhythmic speaking or singing of words, ed.) of mantras is said to purify the environment. How should we see this?

### Answer

It depends very much on who chants, and what he chants, and for what purpose he does so. In other words, the mentality of the one who chants the mantras is of utmost importance. Sound is vibration. And vibration can exert a certain influence on our consciousness, provided of course we have a certain sensitivity for it. Certain types of music can be soothing for one person,

while another may become nervous. In general, it is not wise to experiment with chanting if you are not sure for yourself that you are one hundred percent selfless. The best way to clean the environment is to think noble thoughts. Certain types of incense, fresh flowers, quiet music or certain art can help, but the mental atmosphere is always decisive.

### Question

How can it be that people who are ill – diarrhea or headaches – get better when others read mantras to them?

### Answer

We think this is a misunderstanding. No one gets any better from a therapy or a medicine. Illness is a physical reflection of a mental or psychological imbalance and only the patient can restore harmony. Nevertheless, certain therapies or medicines can help by stimulating the patient to restore the disturbed balance. In this sense, mantras might also help.

There is, however, a great danger. You do not help a sick person by preventing a disease from manifesting itself. With what is referred to as “spiritual” healings, in which one tries to bring about something in the emotional area of the illness, it can happen that the illness is, as it were, pushed back to the emotional, psychological area. Then it seems as if the patient has healed, but after some time the disease returns with double force.

Well, chanting can – like in fact every therapy – bring about something in the psychic nature of the patient, as a result of which the disease (temporarily) cannot express itself. It can also open something in the human being, causing the disease to spread, but then perhaps many more latent emotions and psychological ailments will come about. You may wonder if the person who wants

to heal his fellow man with chanting is aware of these consequences. Does he really know what he is doing?

## Ātman and Jivātman

What is the difference between Ātman and Jivātman?

### Answer

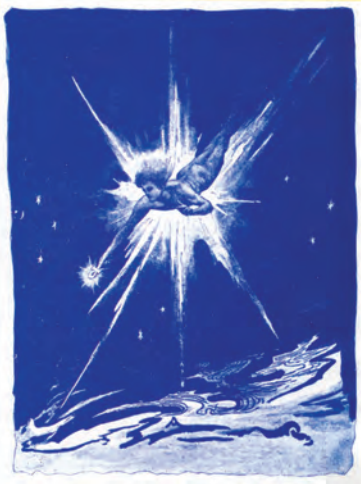
The awareness ranges. Ātman has cosmic consciousness. It belongs to our galaxy. Jivātman has the range of consciousness of our solar system. Incidentally, these are theoretical differences for us. Just as a toddler cannot make a distinction between a professor at the university and a teacher in high school, that is how Ātman and Jivātman are so far removed from our current consciousness that we can only theoretically say something about them, even though they are aspects *within* us.



## I.S.I.S. Foundation

The activities of the I.S.I.S. Foundation (International Study-centre for Independent Search for truth) are based on:

1. The essential unity of all that exists.
2. By reason of this unity: brotherhood as a fact in nature.
3. Respect for everyone's free will (when applied from this idea of universal brotherhood).
4. Respect for everyone's freedom to build up their own view of life.
5. To support the developing of everyone's own view of life and its application in daily practice.



## Why this journal is called *Lucifer*

Lucifer literally means Bringer of Light.

Each culture in the East and West has his bringers of light: inspiring individuals who give the initial impulse to spiritual growth and social reform. They stimulate independent thinking and living with a profound awareness of brotherhood.

These bringers of light have always been opposed and slandered by the establishment. But there are always those who refuse to be put off by these slanderers, and start examining the wisdom of the bringers of light in an open-minded and unprejudiced way.

For these people this journal is written.

“... the title chosen for our magazine is as much associated with divine ideas as with the supposed rebellion of the hero of Milton's *Paradise Lost* ...

We work for true Religion and Science, in the interest of fact as against fiction and prejudice. It is our duty – as it is that of physical Science – to throw light on facts in Nature hitherto surrounded by the darkness of ignorance ... But natural Sciences are only one aspect of SCIENCE and TRUTH. Psychological and moral Sciences, or theosophy, the knowledge of divine truth, are still more important ...”

(Helena Petrovna Blavatsky in the first issue of *Lucifer*, September 1887)